FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL UK 34

EARLY BIRD

Early Bird Selection

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INSTITUT FRANÇAIS

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Breaking out from La Réunion – Brilliana Domitile Clain who plays Audrey in ***Marmaille*** (Page 5). Image: ©Cine Nomine

Dear Programmers

In tandem with IFCinéma and with the support of Screen Scotland, the organisers of the 2026 French Film Festival UK have compiled an Early Bird Selection which is now available for booking – directly with the festival. The titles (all films in French with English subtitles) will also form part of the festival's main programme when full details are revealed later in the year. There's an appealing mix of heart-warming dramas, sumptuous costume epics, comedy, animation, documentary, new talents, Cannes connections, festival favourites and two classics by masters Claude Chabrol and Jean Grémillon.

The formats are Blu-ray, DCP or direct download and are flagged on the attached notes. Titles can be reserved for the period 16 October to 10 December 2026 inclusive. The festival also will also supply supporting material including hi-res images, trailers and press packs where available.

For further information contact:
richardmowe@mac.com / mobile **07710 762 149**

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Cover image: **Eol Personne as the young boy and Karim Leklou as Aymeric in *Jim's Story*, directed by Arnaud and Jean-Marie Larrieu (Photo UniFrance)**

Early Bird Selection



All Your Faces
Je verrai toujours vos visages (NC 15+)

Since 2014, France's Restorative Justice programme has offered a safe space for dialogue between offenders and victims – supported by professionals and volunteers. Among the participants are Chloé, a victim of sexual assault; Grégoire, Nawelle, and Sabine, victims of burglary and snatching; while Nassim, Issa, and Thomas are offenders, convicted of violent robberies.

In this emotional and difficult journey, they must overcome resentment to find solace and forgiveness, and perhaps, at the end of the road, some of them might even find healing. Adèle Exarchopoulos, won Best Supporting Actress César Award for her role. Herry's new film *Another Day / Garance* world premiered at this year's Cannes Film Festival.

Cast **Gilles Lellouche, Adèle Exarchopoulos, Birane Ba, Leïla Bekhti, Dali Benssalah, Élodie Bouchez, Miou-Miou**
Director **Jeanne Herry** | 2023 | France | 118 mins
French with English subtitles

Herry is brilliant at taking hold of social issues and turning them into works of fiction... an ideal blend of intelligence and emotion. *CineEurope*

Watch the trailer here



Elementary
Apprendre (NC 15+)

The latest documentary from Claire Simon follows the school days of staff and pupils at the Ecole Makarenko at Ivry-sur-Seine just outside Paris. This is very much an observational documentary with the camera in the classroom, in the playground and making us privy to the whole educational process.

Simon captures the personalities of the children, the caring teachers but also some of the conflicts, the tensions and the differences in a very mixed, multicultural school. Simon is a filmmaker able to bring a freshness and curiosity to each project.

Director **Claire Simon** | 2024 | France | 104 mins
French with English subtitles

Simon takes a mosaic approach, with each little scene contributing to the vivid bigger picture. *Screen*

Watch the trailer here

Early Bird Selection



Jim's Story
Le Roman de Jim (NC 18)

When Aymeric runs into Florence, a former co-worker, one evening in Saint-Claude in the Haut-Jura she is six months pregnant and single. As she gives birth to Jim, Aymeric is there. They spend happy years together until Christophe, Jim's biological father, shows up... It could be the start of a melodrama, yet it's also the start of an odyssey into fatherhood.

Starring seasoned character actor Karim Leklou, this is a touching melodrama of fatherhood that depicts a relentlessly nice guy who somehow walks wide-eyed into an emotional catastrophe. Adapted from the novel by Pierric Bailly.

Cast **Karim Leklou, Laetitia Dosch, Sara Giraudeau, Bertrand Belin, Andranic Manet, Eol Personne**

Directors **ArnaudLarrieu, Jean-Marie Larrieu** | 2024
France | 101 mins
French with English subtitles

Brothers Arnaud and Jean-Marie Larrieu deliver their leanest and most moving film yet. *Le Monde*

Watch the trailer here



Lads (NC 15+)

Spurred on by his debt-ridden father, young Ethan starts training as a jockey at a renowned stable that only accepts the very best to compete in steeplechase, the most dangerous form of horse racing.

This turns out to be a dark world governed by money and all it entails – betting, cheating, doping – marked by rivalry and cruelty towards both the callow jockeys and their four-legged companions. Jeanne Balibar and Marco Luraschi star in Julien Menanteau's first feature film, which gives free rein to a spirited and raw style.

Cast **Marco Luraschi, Jeanne Balibar, Marc Barbé, Phénix Brossard, Léon Vitale**

Director **Julien Menanteau** | 2023 | France / Belgium
91 mins
French with English subtitles

An incredibly original proposition in the landscape of young French cinema. *Cineuropa*

Watch the trailer here

Early Bird Selection



Lost Illusions
Les Illusions perdues (NC 15)

Adapted from Honoré de Balzac's masterpiece, *Lost Illusions* charts the life of ambitious romantic poet Lucien de Rubempré (Benjamin Voisin) as he ascends through the hierarchy of 19th century high society. *Lost Illusions* is an epic and visually sumptuous costume drama that chronicles the erosion of romanticism and idealism as Lucien is corrupted by the trappings of success and falls victim to his own hubris.

The film won seven César Awards, including Best Film and returns to the FFF Selection by audience demand as Xavier Giannoli's latest *The Rays and Shadows / Les Rayons et les Ombres* marks another critical and box office success.

Cast **Benjamin Voisin, Cécile De France, Vincent Lacoste, Xavier Dolan, Jeanne Balibar, Gérard Depardieu, Louis-do de Lencquesaing**
Director **Xavier Giannoli** | 2021 | France | 149 mins
French with English subtitles

It's acted with such terrific panache that not enjoying it is impossible.
The Guardian

Watch the trailer here



Mum Don't Love Me No Mo'
Marmaille (NC 15)

A stark social drama from La Réunion: 15-year-old Thomas dreams of winning a breakdance competition and moving to mainland France. Alas, when his mother kicks him and his sister Audrey out of the house, their world falls apart. They are taken to live with their estranged father and his new family, who reluctantly take them in, and now must cope with feelings of abandonment and rebuild their lives on their own.

Thomas's talent for dancing not only provides him with a means to express his feelings amid all this – it also helps him overcome personal calamity through his love for music.

Cast **Maxime Calicharane, Brillana Domitile Clain, Vincent Vermignon, Délixia Perrine, Grazellia Estagie, Katiana Castelnau**
Director **Grégory Lucilly** | 2025 | France-Réunion | 92 mins
French-Creole with English subtitles

Universal story of abandonment and brotherhood, forging a link between Réunion and the motherland [France]." *Sortir à Paris*

Watch the trailer here

Early Bird Selection



ANIMATION

Nina and the Hedgehog's Secret

Nina et le secret du hérisson (N/C PG+)

An exquisite and enchanting animation featuring the voice talents of Audrey Tautou and Guillaume Canet. Ten-year-old Nina has always filled her imagination with the tales of a hedgehog her father tells her every night before she goes to sleep. But when her dad loses his job, Nina starts to worry about the future of her family. After hearing rumours of a treasure hidden in his old factory, she and her best friend Mehdi decide to embark on a risky hold-up and wild adventure to search for the swag and share it between her father and his fellow co-workers. Thus, an incredible adventure begins.. Directed by Alain Gagnol and Jean-Loup Felicioli, the Academy Award-nominated directors of *A Cat in Paris*.

Voice Cast **Audrey Tautou, Guillaume Canet**
Directors **Alain Gagnol, Jean-Loup Felicioli** | 2022 | France
79 mins | English with French subtitles

Dazzling. An ingenious film with superb colours and full of humour. *Télérama*

Watch the trailer here



Ride Away

À bicyclette ! (NC 15)

An unforgettable road trip across Europe, from the Atlantic to Istanbul... Director Mathias Mlekuz stars in a fictionalised version of the real-life bike pilgrimage he took with his co-star and actor friend Philippe Rebbot. They travel from the west coast of France to Istanbul to pay homage to Mathias' son Youri after his untimely and shocking death.

Filled with moments of intense emotions and occasionally bursting with laughter, this journey becomes an opportunity for these two friends to explore their friendship and pay tribute to Youri's memory. Audience Award, best director and best music at Angoulême Francophone Film Festival 2024

Cast **Mathias Mlekuz, Philippe Rebbot, Josef Mlekuz, Adriane Gradziel, Laurent Jouault, Marziyeh Rezaei**
Director **Mathias Miekuz** | 2024 | France | 89 mins
French with English subtitles

Bittersweet middle-aged bromance. *The Guardian*

Watch the trailer here

Early Bird Selection



Rise

En corps (NC 15+)

A talented ballet dancer's life is turned upside down – first by an injury and then when she catches her boyfriend cheating on her with her understudy. Élise (played by Marion Barbeau) determines to find a path to physical and emotional recovery, travelling from Paris to Brittany. There she embraces the artistic freedom of contemporary dance in an ensemble run by esteemed choreographer Hofesh Shechter (playing himself) and finds new ways to reinvent herself.

A feel-good treat from director Cédric Klapisch and a firm French Film Festival favourite, back by popular request in the wake of Klapisch's latest *Colours of Time* from last year's selection.

Cast **Marion Barbeau, Hofesh Shechter, Denis Podalydès, Pio Marmaï, François Civil, Muriel Robin**
Director **Cédric Klapisch** | 2022 | France / Belgium | 117 mins
French with English subtitles

Star-making turn from an acting newcomer: ballet-trained Paris Opera principal Marion Barbeau.
Los Angeles Times

Watch the trailer here



Sarah Bernhardt

La Divine (NC 18)

Sumptuous, rapturous, and full of drama, Sarah Bernhardt's life is here to be experienced in all its theatrical glory – just as La Divine intended. Bernhardt (Sandrine Kiberlain) is larger than life and a cyclone of contradictions. The original theatre diva, her world is blinding stage lights, opulent wealth, and delicious scandals. Ruled by fleeting fancies and sweeping emotions, she even holds court from her sickbed. And what better time to revisit her groundbreaking 19th-century stardom than in recovery from surgery?

Guillaume Nicloux's decadent biopic (a hit from last year's Festival selection) is an experience like no other: from exotic menageries to consuming affairs, *La Divine* is as showstopping as she is capricious.

Cast **Sandrine Kiberlain, Laurent Lafitte, Amira Casar**
Director **Guillaume Nicloux** | 2024 | France | 98 mins
French with English subtitles

Shines the spotlight on a figure as eccentric as she was visionary, still regarded today as a legend of world theatre. *Sortir à Paris*

Watch the trailer here

Early Bird Selection



Three Friends
Trois Amies (NC 15)

Friendship is at a premium in this engaging chamber piece set in Lyon from director Emmanuel Mouret.

In their quest for fulfilment, three forty-something friends embody differing views on romance. Joan (India Hair) is ready to give up on her marriage after the passion has faded. She confides in Alice (Camille Cottin), who counters that her own marriage is better off without fervour, believing, "synchronized love is rare." To avoid the drama of heartache, she's content with mere affection. Meanwhile, their unmarried friend Rebecca (Sara Forestier) is secretly having an affair with Alice's husband and hoping for a deeper commitment.

Cast **Camille Cottin, Sara Forestier, India Hair, Grégoire Ludig, Damien Bonnard, Vincent Macaigne, Éric Caravaca**
Director **Emmanuel Mouret** | 2024 | France | 118 mins
French with English subtitles

It doesn't get more French than this... Mouret reaching a peak style he's been perfecting from film to film. *Hollywood Reporter*

Watch the trailer here



The Ties That Bind Us
L'Attachement (NC 15)

Exploring the challenges of modern family structures, the film follows a single father, a feminist librarian, and a child seeking a place to belong as they navigate love, desires, and redefining what it means to be a family.

By revealing their aspirations, their fears, their choices, writer/director Carine Tardieu depicts different ways in which humans create families. Based on the novel *L'Intimité* by Alice Ferney, the film scooped a César for best film. Her new project *All the Little Live Things* was pitched at the Cannes Film Festival market and is based on the 1967 American novel of the same title by Pulitzer Prize winner Wallace Stegner.

Cast **Valeria Bruni Tedeschi, Pio Marmaï, César Botti, Raphaël Quenard, Vimala Pons**
Director **Carine Tardieu** | 2024 | France / Belgium | 106 mins
French with English subtitles

Deeply moving drama about "chosen families". *Le Francophile*

Watch the trailer here

Early Bird **Classics**



A Judgement in Stone
La Cérémonie (NC 18)

France's master of suspense, Claude Chabrol, relishes every malevolent, icily controlled shot of this perfectly constructed thriller, right up to its terrifying, violent climax. Adapted from Ruth Rendell's classic thriller, *A Judgement in Stone*, Chabrol transposes it to a remote French village.

This iconic film has left a lasting mark on the cinematic landscape. Its influence transcends borders, shaping contemporary masterpieces like Bong Joon-Ho's *Parasite*.

Cast **Isabelle Huppert, Sandrine Bonnaire, Jacqueline Bisset, Virginie Ledoyen, Jean-Pierre Cassel**
Director **Claude Chabrol** | 1995 | France / Germany | 111 mins
French with English subtitles

Creates a palpable sense of unease that fully justifies the shockingly violent finale. *Time Out*

Watch the trailer here



Stormy Waters
Remorques (15)

Jacques Prévert cowrote this atmospheric tale of the romantic trials of a tugboat captain, played by the iconic French star Jean Gabin. For André and the other members of the Cyclone's crew, existence is harshly divided between the danger of the stormy seas and the safety of life at home with their patient women. When André meets temptation in the form of the alluring Catherine during a risky rescue, he comes perilously close to betraying his wife of ten years.

Claustrophobic, meticulously crafted, and dominated by two great French stars of the time – Gabin and Michèle Morgan. The haunting film is distinguished by beautiful tracking shots and cunning special-effects work.

Cast **Jean Gabin, Michèle Morgan, Madeleine Renaud**
Director **Jean Grémillon** | 1941 | France | 84 mins
French with English subtitles

Claustrophobic tale, meticulously crafted with stars Gabin and Morgan commanding total attention and respect. *Derek Winnert*

Watch the trailer here

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